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to its grounds in Solomons, Maryland. As a moved property, it was initially taken off the National Register of Historic Places and relisted after its successful restoration in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The station is interpreted and accessible to the public at its new location. Other screwpile structures relocated ashore include the 1855 Seven Foot Knoll, Maryland, moved in 1987 to Pier 5 on Baltimore's Inner Harbor; the 1879 Hooper Strait, Maryland, moved in 1967 to the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels; Half Moon Reef, Texas, moved in 1980 to the Port Lavaca Community Park; and the Roanoke River, North Carolina, moved in 1955 to Edenton, North Carolina. The latter serves as a private residence. Several other towers were moved after they were purchased by private owners, including Southampton Shoals Light Station, California, which became a yacht club and Oakland Harbor Light Station, California, now a restaurant.

Cape Hatteras Light will be re-lit in a special ceremony. The navigational light is currently

created by a DCB-24 installed in 1972; the park is actively searching for a first-order Fresnel lens to replace this modern optic. The Seashore plans to reopen the tower to visitors around Memorial Day. As part of the overall preservation plan, the light station will be interpreted to its 1890s period. Saving the tower from the eroding shoreline was a crucial phase in its preservation. The successful move to its new location assures that millions of visitors will continue to enjoy this National Historic Landmark.

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For more information on the Cape Hatteras Light Station relocation project, visit <<http://www.nps.gov/caha/lrp.htm>>.

For more on lighthouses in general, visit the National Maritime Initiative's Lighthouse Heritage web site <[http://www.cr.nps.gov/maritime/lt\\_index.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/maritime/lt_index.htm)>.

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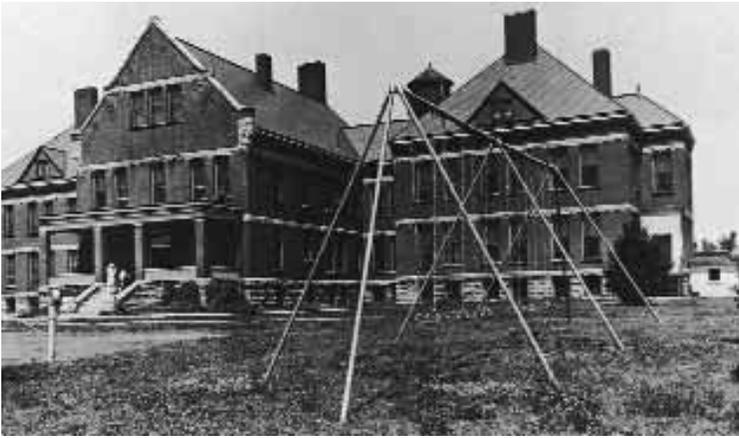
## The Canton Asylum for Insane Indians

**T**he South Dakota State Historical Society/State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) was contacted by Harold Iron Shield concerning the protection of the Canton Asylum cemetery. He requested that a National Register nomination be prepared for the cemetery so it would have some protection, as it is located on the Municipal Golf Course. He was concerned that golfers were playing through the cemetery. We suggested that Mr. Iron Shield contact the owner of the property, the city of Canton, to resolve this issue. He informed us that his appeals to the City of Canton were unheeded. We informed him that it is not easy to list a cemetery on the National Register of Historic Places unless it was associated with an important historical event. We also informed him that listing on National Register would not stop people from

golfing on the property, although it might provide some recognition of the cemetery.

The City of Canton was contacted to inquire if they would object to the listing of the cemetery. The city supported nominating the cemetery. At the beginning of the research process, the SHPO discovered that there was very little information concerning the Canton Asylum. We had to rely on several secondary resources to write the nomination. The SHPO survey form noted that information could be found at the South Dakota State Archives. Reviewing the articles in the archives, we discovered that the cemetery was the only remaining site associated with the Asylum. A nomination was prepared, and the cemetery was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in February 1998.

The Canton Asylum for Insane Indians was established by Congress in 1899 and the Indian



*Main Building,  
Hiawatha Indian  
Asylum, Canton,  
South Dakota.*

Appropriation Act of 1900 set aside \$3,000 for land and \$42,000 for construction of a building. Passage of the Act had met with strong opposition from the Department of the Interior and the Superintendent of the U. S. government's St. Elizabeths Hospital for the Insane in Washington, DC. Both felt that adding to the Washington Institution would better serve the interest of the patients and the public.<sup>1</sup>

Because of its central location among the Western states with large Indian populations and because of the influence of Representative O.S. Gifford and Senator R. R. Pettigrew, Canton was chosen as the site for the asylum. One hundred acres were purchased one mile east of Canton on the hills overlooking the Sioux River.<sup>2</sup> The first building was erected in 1901 at a cost of \$55,000, plus \$1,000 for improvements.<sup>3</sup> John Charles of Wisconsin was the supervising architect. The three-story structure, constructed in the form of a Maltese cross, had 75 rooms.

Oscar Gifford was appointed the first superintendent. He assumed responsibility in November 1901, while the building was under construction. A year later, his staff consisted of Dr. John F. Turner, a financial clerk, a matron, a seamstress, a cook, a laundress, a night watchman, an engineer, two attendants, and two laborers.<sup>4</sup>

The first patient, a Sioux man, age 33, was sent to Canton directly from the Santee reservation in Nebraska on December 31, 1902. The Hiawatha Asylum, as it was known locally, began formally accepting patients in 1903.<sup>5</sup> By the end of the year, the asylum housed 16 patients, 10 males and 6 females, with 1 man dying during the year. "The patients' tribal affiliations were Cherokee, Comanche, Ossage, Pawnee, Mission Indian of California, Winnebago, Shoshone, Chippewa, and Sioux."<sup>6</sup> These first patients were diagnosed with eight different types of mental

conditions: chronic epileptic dementia, alcoholic dementia, senile dementia, congenital epileptic idiocy, congenital imbecility, acute melancholia, chronic melancholia, and chronic mania.

The first death occurred on May 20, 1903. The patient was a 21-year old Sioux male. He was diagnosed as "dementia, epileptic chronic." He suffered a violent epileptic convulsion that caused his death. Superintendent Gifford notified the agent of the reservation where the dead patient had originally lived. However, after receiving no request to send the body home, the superintendent made arrangement for an interment on the grounds. A section of land was reserved, and over the next 30 years, it received the remains of the patients from the asylum. The Bureau of Indian Affairs informed Mr. Gifford that stone markers were unwarranted, so the graves were unmarked. On a chart hanging in the office, the superintendent recorded the name and location of each deceased patient.

In the history of the institution, the asylum had only two superintendents. Dr. Harry Hummer accepted the position as superintendent, when Mr. Gifford resigned. In 1912, under the direction of Dr. Hummer a two-story hospital was constructed, with a separate dining room for employees, a hydrotherapy unit and solarium. However, the hospital had no medical facilities beyond a drug room and a simple operating room. The building was used primarily for housing.<sup>7</sup>

In 1929, an investigation of Canton Asylum was conducted. Dr. Silk performed this investigation. Dr. Hummer ordered this investigation because he wanted an impartial and unbiased report of the conditions at the asylum. Dr. Silk described the asylum as "a place of padlocks and chamber pots."<sup>8</sup> Attendants used their own discretion about using restraints and locking patients in their room. Dr. Silk noted the lack of maintaining patient records. It suggested poor medical care and supervision of the patients. Case summaries of patients who died were lacking, only death certificates were found. Hummer failed to keep precise essential records of daily treatment and patient's response. Dr. Silk was shocked to learn that 50 percent of the deaths at the asylum were attributed to tuberculosis and that patients were not being treated for syphilis. The final report concluded that intolerable conditions existed in all departments. However, he had one positive comment, the patients diet was wholesome and adequate.

In March 1929, Indian Affairs officials in Washington authorized three major actions: the replacement of Superintendent Hummer, the closing of the Canton Asylum, and the transfer of patients to state institutions. However, Congress approved the request to keep the asylum operating at full capacity.

It was not until John Collier assumed office as commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1932, that the office took notice of the asylum again. Mr. Collier reviewed all past reports and was outraged by the practices at the asylum. The Secretary of the Interior approved the use of funds from the Public Works Administration to enlarge facilities at Saint Elizabeths and then set a January 1934 closing date for the Canton Asylum. However, the citizens of Canton urged the Secretary of the Interior to re-consider his action. They stated that closing the asylum would cause a severe financial loss to the city. An injunction was issued.

Dr. Silk conducted another investigation of the asylum. He found conditions the same as they had been in 1929. Several patients exhibited no symptoms of mental illness. Dr. Hummer would not release patients without sterilizing them. However, the asylum did not have the equipment to perform the surgery, so he refused to discharge patients. "Of the estimated 10 discharges per year, nine occurred through the death of the inmate. Some of those who died at the asylum were buried at their agencies, others in a cemetery on the asylum grounds."<sup>9</sup>

The District Court of the United States dismissed the injunction order for the District of South Dakota in December of 1933. This decision opened the way for transfer of patients. Sixty-nine patients left Canton for St. Elizabeths on December 21, 1933. Two additional patients were sent to Washington, when they were well enough to travel. The remaining patients were released back to the reservations.

Between 1933 and 1939 the property was used as a state penitentiary. The property of the asylum was given to the city of Canton in 1946. In 1949, the Canton-Inwood Hospital was opened in the old asylum hospital. However, in the late 1940s the remaining buildings were razed for a new hospital on the site. A golf course was opened in 1986 on part of the original site and the cemetery is now within the fairway between the 5th hole and 6th holes.

"From 1902 to 1934, approximately 374 Indians from 50 tribes were sent to the asylum. By

1970, a complete burial stone with a bronze plaque had been placed in the cemetery there. Listed on the plaque were the names of 120 inmates who had died and were buried at Canton during the 32 years of that institution's tumultuous but forgotten existence."<sup>10</sup>

As a reminder to the citizens of Canton, the Native American Reburial Restoration Committee organizes annual prayer ceremonies at the cemetery. As the last remaining evidence of the Canton Asylum, the cemetery was listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is currently being investigated as a potential National Historic Landmark.

Having the cemetery listed on the National Register has increased public awareness. After the nomination process began the City of Canton posted signage to deter golfers from playing within the fenced off cemetery boundaries. Further research is necessary including archeological survey to determine the locations of the graves as it is possible that some graves rest outside the protection of the wooden fence.

#### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> *The History of Lincoln County, SD*, Lincoln County History Committee, 1985.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, page 37
- <sup>3</sup> Hoover, Herbert T. *Canton Asylum*, 1984.
- <sup>4</sup> Putney, Diane T. The Canton Asylum for Insane Indians, 1902-1934 *South Dakota History* 14 Spring 1984: 4.
- <sup>5</sup> According to *Canton Asylum for Insane, 1902-1934*. The first patient arrived on December 31, 1902.
- <sup>6</sup> Putney, Diane T. Canton Asylum for Insane Indians, 1902-1934 *South Dakota History* 14(Spring 1984):4.
- <sup>7</sup> Riney, Scott Power and Powerlessness: The People of the Canton Asylum for Insane Indians. *South Dakota History* 2(Spring/Summer 1997): 44
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, 17.
- <sup>9</sup> Riney, Scott. Power and Powerlessness: The People of the Canton Asylum for the Insane. *South Dakota History* 2(Spring/Summer 1997): 51.
- <sup>10</sup> Putney, Diane T. The Canton Asylum for Insane Indians, 1902-1934 *South Dakota History* 14(Spring 1984): 30.

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- Hoover, Herbert T. *Canton Asylum*, 1984.
- Putney, Diane T. "The Canton Asylum for Insane Indians, 1902-1934" *South Dakota History* 14(Spring 1984):1-30.
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